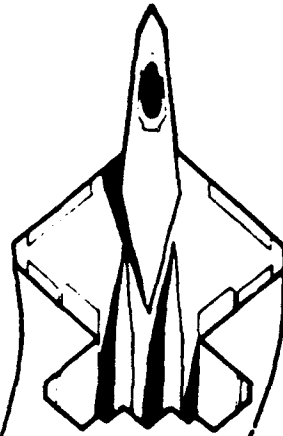


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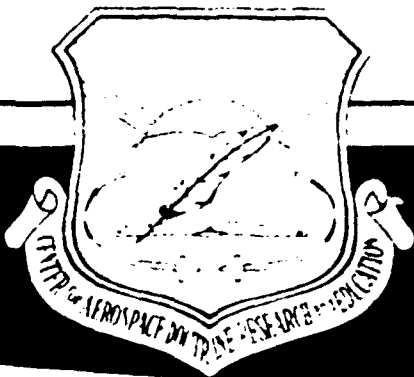


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# THE FUTURE OF THE AIR FORCE



Africa's Realignment and  
America's Strategic Interests  
in the Postcontainment Era

KARL P. MAGYAR

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# **Africa's Realignment and America's Strategic Interests in the Postcontainment Era**

*by*

KARL P. MAGYAR

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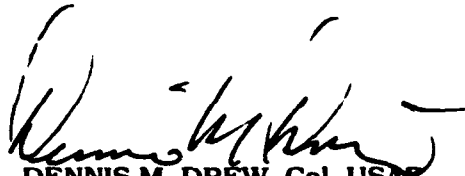
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## Foreword

The stunning changes in the complexion of international politics that began late in the decade of the 1980s and continue today will profoundly affect the American military establishment as a whole, and the US Air Force in particular. Decisions about the future course of the military will be made in the early part of the 1990s which will essentially determine the course of the US Air Force well into the next century. Decisions of such importance require thoughtful consideration of all points of view.

This report is one in a special series of CADRE Papers which address many of the issues that decision makers must consider when undertaking such momentous decisions. The list of subjects addressed in this special series is by no means exhaustive, and the treatment of each subject is certainly not definitive. However, the Papers do treat topics of considerable importance to the future of the US Air Force, treat them with care and originality, and provide valuable insights.

We believe this special series of CADRE Papers can be of considerable value to policymakers at all levels as they plan for the US Air Force and its role in the so-called postcontainment environment.

  
DENNIS M. DREW, Col, USAF  
Director  
Airpower Research Institute

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### **About the Author**

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## **Executive Summary**

Africa has not ranked as one of the core concerns of our traditional security interests, nor is it anticipated that, at least in sub-Saharan Africa we will encounter challenges requiring massive armed intervention. However, the 1991 war with Iraq has uncovered important new developments that make our close monitoring of that continent imperative.

Today, with over one-fourth of the world's active conflicts, Africa maintains its history of ongoing wars. An analysis of the nature of these conflicts suggests that they are an integral component of nation-building under the severe sociopolitical conditions typical of the third world. However, as not all wars or insurgencies are likely to spill beyond a nation's borders, our first task is to distinguish less-important conflicts from others which can threaten a regional balance. Generally, Africa's more dangerous conflicts are characterized by substantial external intervention—which previously had concerned mostly the activities of the Soviet Union, various members of the Warsaw Pact, Cuba, and Libya.

Much is made of Africa's unfortunate social conditions, and many have assumed a simple causal connection between Africa's violence and poverty. This is an unwarranted assumption and may detract from a full comprehension of these conflicts. Similarly, much of our previous African policy focused on the assumed importance of southern Africa's strategic minerals, the sea-lanes around South Africa, and our undisturbed access to Africa's oil. In view of the rapid extrication of the Soviet Union and Cuba from their previous commitments in Africa, these traditional security concerns also require our reexamination. We may also be advised to reassess our standard assumptions regarding our assertive stance on Africa's democratization process and our insistence on rather orthodox free-market structures, which may not be appropriate models and which may produce counterproductive results in these extremely fragile societies.

Although our traditional security interests concerned Soviet-allied activities and the stability of the southern African region, as these concerns abate, a new development has surfaced with potentially important security implications. During the mid-1980s, Iran and Iraq had embarked on an effort to develop their respective alliance relations throughout Africa. With few exceptions, Iran has counted its successes among only black African states while Iraq has advanced its influence among the Arab- and Muslim-dominated states in a broad belt across Sahelian Africa to the Red Sea and including the populations—if not all governments—of northern Africa. Iraq did not capitalize on this diplomatic network during the 1991 Gulf war, but the Iranian-Iraqi activities in the 1980s highlighted the emerging division of the continent into Arab/Muslim and Black African/non-Muslim blocs. Africa harbors 80 percent of all Arabs, and should Arab nationalism become centered in northern Africa, its impact would encompass at least one-third of Africa's population and nearly one-half of its landmass. It could also involve this region in potential conflicts from the Iberian Peninsula, across the

Mediterranean, to the Middle East, to the western Indian Ocean, and to Diego Garcia, an important American strategic base.

The war also highlighted another security dilemma: Most of Iraq's support came from the northern African region, but the war was too short to incorporate Iraq's allies in the effort. However, Libya's Muammar Qadhafi took advantage of our diverted attention to expand his influence in a series of rare successes. During our six-month active confrontation over Kuwait, three previously pro-American governments in Africa were toppled and another survived a major insurgency attack. Qadhafi had demonstrated influence or interest in each of these instances. Then Mali experienced a coup d'état and numerous countries in the Sahelian and the adjacent Black African belt—including Nigeria—experienced labor, student, political and religious unrest.

It is time to reassess the changing security climate in Africa. The reduction of aggressive Soviet-allied interests on the African continent and the moderation of the conflicts in southern Africa has been replaced by an emerging division of the northern portion of the continent with potentially severe implications for our established security interests in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions.

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

AFRICA has never featured among the core concerns of US foreign relations nor at the top of US security considerations. The African continent has at best represented a major geographic feature which could be used to our strategic advantage, but this assumed that the objects of that strategic concern were the Mediterranean, Middle East, Indian Ocean, or the South Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> The value of Africa's geostrategic position lies in air- and ship-basing facilities, sites for communications networks and space-related facilities, and three "choke points" which could impede commercial or military navigation. Until recently Africa was the location of considerable Soviet-allied activities whose objectives were never clear, and hence they required close scrutiny and occasional efforts to neutralize them.

Our political and economic interests in Africa proved to be more clearly defined but less important—especially in view of our well-established interests in Latin America and the recent emergence of the new markets in the Pacific rim. As Africa's countries attained independence in massive numbers during the 1960s, cold war exigencies exaggerated the prospect of these fragile entities falling under the political sway of expansionist "international communism." Hence their ideological proclivities became the object of intense competition. But it was not long before we came to appreciate that the addition of some African ideological sympathies to the Soviet's network of allies was of little negative consequence to the United States. There were exceptions, of course, when such sympathies also en-

tailed the extension of military advantages to the Soviets as in Angola or Somalia.

Economically, Africa's inability to surmount endemic developmental problems was greatly misassessed. The colonial economies had all been channeled toward the interests of the colonial powers and this relationship was for the most part perpetuated after independence. Markets did not develop as had been anticipated, while investments generated a safer return elsewhere. Africa retained its established character as an exporter of primary products with the only commodities of interest being oil and certain key "strategic minerals." Competition for access to these commodities was never intense as economic relations were all but monopolized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, regardless of the ideological persuasion of the African producers. The West also extended most of the available economic aid—a notably scarce feature of Soviet-allied advantages. Concern had been expressed by many public and private interests that the Soviets were conspiring to deny the "Persian Gulf of the minerals" of southern Africa to the West and thereby cripple our advanced defense industries, but this assertion was never persuasively argued. The Soviets had superior quantities of such materials of their own, and the personnel, materials, and the managerial talents required to effectively deny these minerals to the West were at all times far greater than the Soviets possessed. Besides, it would have been tantamount to

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a declaration of economic war. Africans today comprise 9 percent of the world's population, yet they generate only 2 percent of the world's products. Under these circumstances, the entire continent is not a significant global economic player, nor are there any indications that this assessment will be reversed soon.

As far as American interests are concerned, we had little reason to aggressively pursue political alliance and economic relations. Strategically, at least in sub-Saharan Africa, no country has posed any appreciable threat to us unless they were host to Soviet or other interventionists. South Africa possesses the most advanced military capability in the region but that country had been historically, and remains to this day, a peripheral member of the western strategic system. America adopted policies of developing good diplomatic and economic relations while keeping an eye on potentially disturbing strategic reconfigurations—part of our routine cold war global vigilance. This involved the US in occasional supportive actions and in vacillative diplomatic relations, but not in combat roles. Under the Reagan Doctrine, we did undertake a more activist role by supporting *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA), an insurgent movement against the Cuban

and Soviet-supported government of Angola, but again, this did not entail a combat component.

Besides Soviet and American strategic interests in Africa, other external representation with substantial or limited strategic interests included the ex-colonial powers, Cuba, certain East European countries, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Israel, China, and some bizarre collections of European-led mercenary forces. The continent has also offered military interventionists of its own. Under Muammar Qadhafi Libya is the most active adventurer in the north. In the southern region South Africa has fought an advanced-level conventional war in Angola, a low-intensity conflict in Southwest Africa/Namibia, and has been involved in a series of destabilization interventions in several neighboring countries. Other notable African countries which involved their troops outside their borders include Morocco, Ghana, Nigeria, Chad, Somalia, Zaire, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Bourkina Faso. More recently, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized a successful interventionist force which even engaged in aerial bombing in the attempt to bring peace to Liberia's civil war-induced anarchy.

### Notes

1. William J. Foltz offers a most concise geography centered perspective of Africa as a physical obstacle, defensive bastion, launching pad, source of military supplies, and surrogate terrain.

"Africa in Great Power Strategy." In William J. Foltz and Henry S. Blumenthal, *Arms and the African: Military Influences on Africa's International Relations* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 2.

## Chapter 2

## Africa's Conflict Environment

AFRICA ranks at the top of most listings of international conflicts, wars, crises, and violence. Generally, more than one-fourth of the world's armed conflicts rage in Africa, and they range across a spectrum from substantially sized civil disturbances to full-scale conventional wars with external combat participation. Six types have characterized these conflicts:

- conflicts which predate independence but continue unabated;
- wars for independence from colonial or political subjugation;
- civil conflicts which emerged since independence;
- wars across borders involving at least two countries;
- military coups and counter coups; and
- massive civil disturbances and political unrest.<sup>1</sup>

Notable features of these conflicts include their predominant civilian nature, their prolongation, brutality, scale of suffering of the civilian populations, damage to the socioeconomic infrastructure, and the advanced level of foreign (neighboring and extracontinental) participation. Relatively few countries fought actual wars for independence. Most deaths have in fact occurred in civil strife since independence has been attained. Biafra's secessionist attempt from Nigeria in the late 1960s ranks as the single greatest killer of all wars fought in the world since 1945.<sup>2</sup> Most wars in Africa may be characterized as "prolonged civil

conflicts" in that they flare recurrently over a period of many years or even several decades, and they fail to reach an unambiguous conclusion. This was the predominant type of war fought in Africa during the initial postindependence period, although by the 1970s such transnational wars as those between Somalia and Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, and South Africa and Angola emerged.

The origins and causes for these wars require at least brief comment. A proper assessment of this question—however difficult to provide—should offer an indication of the course of future events which is essential for strategic planners. One group of analysts offers a disturbing explanation for the causes of this violence which bodes ill for the future.<sup>3</sup> They suggest that Africans have an ingrained cultural proclivity toward violence which permeates their history. Traditional tribal battles, wars against foreign colonial forces, modern civil and transnational conflicts—all are characterized by a unique disposition toward pervasive violence. Most African warfare, these analysts claim, is a pretext for the underlying and overpowering social and individual need for battle. This is an unorthodox view, yet it is unfortunately supported by much apparent evidence in our own day.

A second group of analysts argues equally persuasively that today's violence in Africa is the historical legacy of external penetration of Africa by first, Arab, then European traders and colonial powers. They disrupted the numerous

indigenous cultures, elevated slavery to commercial proportions, and exploited natural resources in the relentless quest for capitalist objectives. The underlying economic bases of colonialism gave way at independence to political and strategic neocolonialism. The results were the same: Africans suffered the deprivation and violence which competing external interests introduced. Given the early economic relationship with forced imperial expansionism, it is not surprising that this view remains popular especially in neo-Marxist circles.

Yet a third group of analysts explains Africa's violence by referring to universal characteristics of states as they evolve through distinct and universal phases. During the colonial period, these nascent political units were in transition from their traditionally fragmented nature toward the formation of national states with their own political institutions and elite cadres. Independence marked the beginning of that most painful period in the history of nations—the arduous consolidative process. This phase is marked by rapidly vacillatory changes as competing sectors vie for predominance. It is an expected development without which internal power will not be equilibrated and hence the state remains externally dependent. This is the era of civil wars, the collapse of regimes, coups, and military rule. The central object of this phase is attainment of popular domestic legitimacy and can be realized only by the attainment of popularly accepted and stable political institutions or by identification with a specific institutional order or charismatic leader and entourage. Violence is manifested in most countries during this phase but from it emerges the national myth—so important for legitimizing and establishing a historical identity. Beyond this phase are periods of attempted expansionism of influence or actual absorption of vulnerable neighboring territories. Later, as well-

developed powers, nations may demonstrate their imperial ambitions and global power.

The "evolutionists," who hold this latter view, reject the contention that violence in Africa will remain a pervasive feature. Among the world's modern, industrially developed democracies, internal violence has all but atrophied, and so it will be for Africans in due course. More worrisome are the activities of external interventionists who take advantage of vulnerable African states in their consolidative stages. In this case, conflicts that would otherwise remain as modest-level civil wars are greatly exacerbated to the levels of major confrontations.

The notable feature of these three contrasting views which purport to explain Africa's violence is that all agree that there is no basis for expecting an early end to conflicts in Africa. The evolutionist perspective offers at least the hope of more stable developments, but this hope will not materialize in the foreseeable future. We must guard that we do not naively act on the presumption that Africa's conflicts are only a temporary aberration which will be overcome by the mere development of the economies of the continent. Moreover, development of these economies is itself the subject of pessimistic appraisals.

Thus, civil wars in the protracted consolidative period are expected occurrences, however unfortunate. They threaten internal rule and stability but scarcely affect the external community unless an external interventionist enters the fray. The conflict becomes globally more volatile if another external power seeks to redress the new imbalance by supporting the opposite side in the conflict. At that point, the war rages among the African protagonists while the external intervenors continue to fuel the flames by providing military support, finances, or occasionally combat leadership or participation. Although Africa

may be rapidly declining as an object of cold war competition, new external interventionist forces, as well as the continent's own expansionists, have already moved to exploit the vulnerabilities of Africa's weak entities.

In sum, whatever the origins of violence on the African continent, a realistic assessment suggests that there is no reason to expect these conflicts to abate in the near future. From the US viewpoint the need to closely monitor these developments and to distinguish those with regional or global consequences from those with primarily parochial concerns is of primary importance. Learning about the motivating nature of a conflict, its history, and the usual array of external participants should offer a profile of that conflict's

relevance to US policymakers. Certainly, some conflicts merit various degrees of intervention. Yet alternative, nonmilitary responses offer prospects for international diplomatic configurations which would either seek to contain conflicts or to systematically starve them out by joint efforts to reduce—if not eliminate—external intervention. The recent civil war in Liberia has introduced an interesting development in that a consortium of military conscripts from the surrounding ECOWAS states has intervened in a joint effort to resolve the dispute by the use of regional forces. This effort has received the enthusiastic backing of the US government and it portends the possible emergence of a new strategy for conflict resolution in Africa.

#### Notes

1. These six types are based on an analysis presented by Dr Karl P. Magyar, "Low-Intensity Conflicts: The African Context" in Stephen Blank, et al., *Responding to Low-Intensity Conflict Challenges* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, December 1990), 196.

2. Michel Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *Crises in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 4.

3. Dr Karl P. Magyar, "Culture and Conflict in Africa's History: The Transition to the Modern Era" a paper in *The International Dimension of Culture and Conflict: Proceedings of the Symposium* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1991), 31.

## Chapter 3

## Africa's Sociopolitical Development

WRITERS on that continent's affairs frequently assert that conflicts in Africa emerge from the sorry state of its social development. In fact, no such simple assumptions are warranted. The connection between levels of social development and frequency of conflict is tenuous at best. A broad band of states including Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia is rent by continuous conflicts as well as by abysmal poverty. Yet other parts of Africa such as Sahelian and West Africa, which contain far more inhabitants and are divided along many more numerous ethnic lines, are comparatively much more peaceful, and their economies are not notably better-off than those of the Eastern Sudanic region. In southern Africa, such countries as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia have also experienced conflicts yet they rank among Africa's most developed nations. Elsewhere, civil and international conflicts are not confined to only the poorest countries. Examples include Israel, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, and several countries in Latin America, starting with Cuba. We may also refer to the participants in both world wars, which were fought among the world's richest nations.

Africa's poor countries, which include nearly the entire black population on the continent, are in their early consolidative stages and therein lies the source of the problem. Poverty is but one dimension and it is a symptom—not the cause of the

malaise. At issue is power and which group shall prevail. In Somalia, competition rages among rival clans which had separate identities during the colonial days. The issue is neither ethnic nor religious as all contestants are from the ethnically homogeneous Somali people. The Eritreans in neighboring Ethiopia are not attempting to replace the Amhara-dominated government with their own ethnic representatives. The Eritreans maintain that they are merely seeking independence from Ethiopia—the country to which they were conveniently appended by external interventionists in the early 1950s. Better economic conditions could have just as easily speeded up that conflict and perhaps even resolved it by now. In Sudan, Africa's largest country, widespread poverty certainly does not encourage the integration of the diverse populations. In fact, even the British colonial government administered the country as two distinct entities. The northern portion, which is the base for the ruling elite, is comprised of a Muslim-Arab population while the southern Sudanese are divided typically into a great variety of non-Arab speakers who, as Christians and animists, resent Khartoum's domination. Again, these ethnic-based animosities would hardly be mitigated by only improved economic conditions. In Chad, rivals to power represent a variety of ethnic-based competitors, and among such groups, external meddling has fueled the inces-

sant civil disputes. The long-standing conflict with Libya over the northern mineral-rich Aozou region has not facilitated the settlement of the contest for internal predominance.

Elsewhere on the continent, the situation is not different. Had secessionist Biafra succeeded in separating its oil-rich lands from Nigeria, it would have constituted Africa's richest nation. Angola's long war may be traced to the colonial era and the intention to oust Portugal. Portugal left in 1975, but the war became transformed into a civil war between rival geographic and ethnic-based factions, each backed by external sponsors. Angola should not be poor, but is due to inept colonial developmental policies and the prolongation of the internal conflict which did not permit the process of development to commence. Similarly, the Portuguese colonial administration had scarcely extended effective controls over Mozambique before they departed and left *Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique* (FRELIMO), a comparatively weak liberation movement, in control. The ensuing civil war was not caused by simple poverty, but was instigated by Rhodesians who organized the *Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana* (RENAMO) forces to serve the needs of the neighboring Rhodesian conflict. South Africa thereafter undertook sponsorship of RENAMO in order to weaken FRELIMO which had been sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's own black insurgent movement.

Such examples attest to the multifarious causes of these conflicts. Poverty is certainly a characteristic of most of these states, but poverty is also a frequent manifestation of most states in their early postindependence period. We may be misled by the overidentification of con-

licts with poverty, and we may thereby fail to identify other more relevant causes for conflicts. A major problem has been the fact that traditionally Africa contained over 2,000 distinct ethnic/linguistic units, and these were in turn organized into more than 50 countries by the colonial occupiers. Tribes were divided while traditional enemies were included within the same modern borders which suited colonial and not necessarily indigenous needs. Power at independence was transferred to small, urban-based political movements, usually dominated by a single foreign-educated charismatic leader. After independence, competing forces emerged, often with the aid of foreign support, and the arduous process of legitimization was set in motion. Making a nation out of such diversity is challenging enough, but under conditions of low economic development the task is all but impossible. Thus, rather than arguing poverty as a cause of conflict, we might just as convincingly argue that the relative paucity of conflicts in the face of widespread poverty is itself noteworthy. Without foreign interventions, which exacerbate these conflicts, we could expect that at least the gravity, if not the frequency, of these conflicts would be considerably less.

African states in their fragile consolidative periods are experiencing a variety of social challenges which may constitute political experimentation rather than positive resolutions to the steady onslaught of developmental problems. States have introduced or replaced a variety of governmental structures and ideologies, economic programs, diplomatic postures, civilian or military regimes, and ethnic relations—all in the attempt to build stable, productive,

popularly accepted, in short, legitimate institutions and regimes. The international community has not necessarily aided this process with overly dogmatic assertions that one or another socioeconomic model is naturally more superior.

### Economic Structures

"AFRO-MARXISTS" adopted the structures of the Soviet-allied camp which stressed strong central controls and planning of the state-owned economic sectors. Building total industrial systems was encouraged with partnership, where necessary, being supplied by the states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Contrasted to this path was that of the "Afro-capitalists" who insisted on the state-guaranteed freedom of private marketplaces—with partnership being offered by the external OECD traders and investors. But, as Professor Crawford Young has concluded, neither of these two systems has significantly outperformed the other, and a clear conclusion cannot be drawn.<sup>1</sup> Both external models are based on socio-economic infrastructures which do not prevail in Africa and these models' advantages may best be realized only in industrially advanced societies. Perhaps both are equally irrelevant as developmental models for the early consolidative stages.

Despite the announced preference for one or the other ideology, Africa's states will inevitably derive their own developmental character. That character will emerge from the fact that the state is and will remain the most dominant producer and consumer. Marxists gained little with their attempted total monopoly over all economic activity while they stifled even the marginal advantages of competition and individual resourcefulness and innovation. On the other hand, a free

market quickly lends itself to corruption in these fragile dualistic economies while opening itself to limitless "exploitation" by enormously powerful external interests. We have proof today of the inadequacies of Marxist models, but in view of the evidence indicating that free markets also have failed in Africa, we have no basis on which to argue the inherent superiority of capitalist enterprises for countries at the beginning stages of national development. Should we persist in our search for relevant external models, we may consider the structures of the newly industrializing countries (NIC)—which hardly developed under conditions of democracy and the absence of state interventionism. Yet their impressive growth rates and relative social stability, the result of firm governmental controls, have accrued considerable legitimacy to these rare successes in the third world.

### Political Structures

THE debate concerning the choice of economic structures parallels the debate regarding the choice of political systems. And, it may be an equally irrelevant debate as at this stage of development, the externally influenced nature of that debate might be premature for Africa. The issues at the center of this debate include the question of political ideology, traditionalism versus modernism, internally developed versus externally originated political structures, civilian versus military regimes, and single versus multiparty systems. Americans have understandably expressed the hope that Africans would adopt modern, civilian, multiparty, liberal-democratic systems. Few countries in Africa conform to this OECD ideal, and those which do cannot attribute occasional developmental success to this condition. Botswana is touted as an example that succeeds because of such democratic foundations,

yet more objective factors such as a small population base; limitless natural wealth; and proximity to South Africa's developed economy, agricultural and mining technology, and transportation infrastructure are vital and rare advantages, especially in view of the symbiotic relationship that has developed between these two countries.<sup>2</sup> Botswana's economy is also skewed in favor of a greatly advantaged urban elite class while the developmental level of the bulk of the population is scarcely distinguishable from the rest of the continent.

After independence, Africa's civilian governments failed to gain wide and lasting respect and soon half had been taken over by military rulers. Several others, such as Angola and Mozambique, did not make a clean separation between civilian and military sectors. Many governments embarked on frequent alternations between civilian and military rule, Ghana and Nigeria being prime examples. Even though they offer a degree of stability, military governments have hardly succeeded in superior developmental performances. Nor have most predominately civilian-ruled states advanced the overall performance of their economies which may be unambiguously traced to the absence of military intervention. Traditional institutions are shunned for the great part by Africans as they involve the perpetuation of competing social groups. Yet the modern state has also failed to integrate the diverse factions and to create the elusive popular legitimate state. And where ideology is debated at all, it is done so largely by competing elitist intellectuals with little evident consequences for the masses. Talk of bourgeoisie, workers, classes, alienation, and capitalism take on a different meaning when viewed in the context of the absence of industrialization, the prevalence of

traditionalism, the predominance of subsistence economic activities, and the continued reliance on global markets and benefactors who today disregard Africans as significant ideological allies.

Finally, the debate regarding political parties is still another Western-introduced concern. Whether single-party or multiparty structures are preferred may be just as inconsequential in the volatile social conditions that characterize Africa's consolidative stage. Modern democracy can scarcely advance without a genuine plural party system, but in Africa such structures may be either premature or of secondary concern compared to economic considerations. Our recent defense of Kuwait's, Saudi Arabia's, and the Emirates' sovereignties demonstrated that democratic structures are not necessarily our first strategic priority. To demand them in Africa, as was most blatantly evident in US diplomatic efforts in Kenya, seems to demonstrate hypocrisy in the US's regard for principles.<sup>3</sup> However, the specter of parties quickly aligning along major ethnic lines, as was the case in Nigeria when that country degenerated into the devastating Biafran War, is very daunting. More recently, ethnic, racial, and religious forces have become accented in a wide arc stretching from Senegal and Mauritania to Uganda and Somalia, an arc which includes one-third of Africa's population. Encouraging political pluralism in this politically fragile region is to court the exacerbation of social tensions, and in Africa's usual "contagious" fashion, the fall of one regime can quickly inspire similar occurrences in domino fashion across the continent. Nor is the danger confined to only the broad arc of Sahelian states. Zimbabwe's new society has been divided along the lines of its two

major ethnic factions. In South Africa, the ANC's commendable efforts to transcend ethnic parochialism and to build national institutions is encountering the divisive opposition of the Inkatha Freedom Party, a traditional, ethnic-based, strongly led Zulu movement that enjoys substantial extracontinental political support.

The issue of political pluralism and democracy must be appreciated alongside the need for economic development, without which the poor may get the benefit of intellectual discourse but will not realize the prospect of rectification. Again, the NICs did not realize their advances under conditions of liberal democracy. Within the OECD states, the most visible long-term conflict has been in Northern Ireland. There, factions have formed along religious lines, but underlying their foundations are profound economic inequities. Commendably,

Africa may be advancing to a new phase of political pluralism, but we must be prepared to deal with the potential adverse consequences should the centralized state machinery become diffused in the absence of commensurate nationwide economic advancement. The debate as to whether people prefer abstract democratic ideals or significant economic gain has hardly been settled, and we should not simplistically assume the universality of OECD political values and policies for states at a significantly different phase of sociopolitical development. In essence, we encourage and applaud African states who have embarked on political reform, but there exists no reason to believe that such measures will result in lasting stabilization and socioeconomic progress nor that these reforms may not encourage the emergence of more divisive forces.

#### Notes

1. Professor Crawford Young, *Ideology & Development in Africa* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 324.

2. As of 1989, Patrick Smith lists only Botswana and Senegal as having multiparty systems. Eight other countries were planning to abandon single party rule. But he observes: "Africa's political changes still have a long way to go." "Promises Still to be Fulfilled," *South*, December 1990/January 1991, 66.

3. Tension between the US and Kenyan governments concerns several human rights and political issues. See "The Tranquillizing of Kenya," *The Economist*, 23 February 1991, 41; Jane Perley, "U.S. Legislators Warn Kenya Rights Record Endangers Aid," *New York Times*, 16 November 1990; and *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report, Sub-Saharan Africa*, 3 August 1990, 2; 4 March 1991, 6; and 22 March 1991, 7.

## Chapter 4

## Contemporary Strategic Concerns

WITH the exception of Liberia's civil war, America's active interests in Africa's conflicts concern mostly the old and well-established wars in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Western Sahara, and Chad. In Ethiopia, the US has been engaged in intensive diplomatic efforts to encourage that government's transition from a pro-Soviet and Cuban orientation to a position of curtailing active military ties to these two allies. However, our political intentions should have conformed to the requirements of Ethiopia's civil war which had taxed the government's abilities and resources to the utmost. Choosing among competing ideological options was a secondary consideration to sheer survival for the embattled Ethiopian government.<sup>1</sup> In Sudan, the US has been keeping a nervous eye on the plight of the refugees who suffer the ravages of the prolonged civil war, again presenting the US with a delicate diplomatic dilemma. Sudan had also taken an active pro-Iraqi stance during the 1991 war. In Angola, the US still financially supports the insurgent movement UNITA, which has been fighting a long battle against the Cuban and Soviet-backed government. The conflict in Namibia was resolved with the attainment of independence in 1990. In that long war, the US gained credibility with its constant pressure on South Africa to yield independence to this colony. In Mozambique, the US has supported the previously socialist government against the controversial right-wing insurgent force, RENAMO. And Chad's pro-American government was toppled in

1990, which ousted Hisssein Habre who had recently harbored US-sponsored anti-Libyan dissidents.<sup>2</sup>

In these well-established conflicts, the US demonstrated different levels of concern and intervention. But Liberia's drawn-out civil war introduced a new dilemma for America's interests in Africa. The government of President Samuel K. Doe had been in power for nearly a decade and had been wrought with corruption, ineptitude, and elements of tribalism. The US had extended about \$500 million in aid, but this had produced no permanent gains, and the country slid further into poverty. A modest-sized rebel movement, which was allegedly supported by neighboring Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast and which reportedly received training and arms from Libya, devastated Liberia and resulted in the death of Doe—albeit at the hands of a rival movement.<sup>3</sup> The US, the only country with historical ties to Liberia, kept a close tab on the deteriorating events and encouraged a combined force from ECOWAS in the attempt to halt the fighting. In August 1990, a 225-strong contingent of US Marines flew into the capital, Monrovia, to evacuate US diplomatic officials and subsequently other US and foreign civilians to US military vessels. Reportedly, rebel leader Prince Johnson had threatened to arrest Americans to force foreign intervention.<sup>4</sup>

The Liberian conflict was a rare case in which an established government, which had not been involved in a long and complex internal war, was ousted by an insurgent force and not by a military coup.

Hitherto, most such efforts throughout the continent had failed. Since there was no Cuban or Soviet involvement, the US did not act massively to support one or the other side, but we did watch our investment in aid dissipate in the turmoil. Nor was there cause to be encouraged by the ouster of the repressive and inept regime as neither of the two rival insurgent factions appeared to be better qualified to rule. This unproductive affair highlighted the problems faced by external financial benefactors when a decade of expensive American labor came to naught.

A somewhat similar situation occurred in Somalia. That country had a long history of turmoil which included war with Ethiopia in the late 1970s. The US had pragmatically aligned with President Mohamed Siad Barre, long a controversial leader of Somalia. As the government fell in January 1991 to a set of internally originated insurgent factions, the US sent in helicopters and ground forces to extract officials and other Americans.<sup>5</sup> Within a few days the capital lay in ruins and the American embassy had been totally looted. Italy also attempted to evacuate its more numerous citizens from Mogadishu with C-130 cargo planes diverted from their supportive mission in the Gulf crisis which interfered with their participation on the allied side in the war against Iraq.

The fall of Doe's government in Liberia, that of Barre in Somalia, and Habre's government in Chad occurred at the height of the crisis concerning America's preparation to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. All three governments, which had been pro-American, had another feature in common: Libya had been involved in varying degrees, not always as a major actor nor always on the side of the insurgents, but involved in all

countries nevertheless. In Liberia, Libya reportedly offered training and arms to Charles Taylor, whose movement initiated that crisis. In Chad, Habre received support from the US, France, Egypt, and Iraq—all opponents of Muammar Qadhafi, himself the main support of Idriss Deby, who ousted Habre.<sup>6</sup> *Africa Confidential* reported that Somalia's Barre had been promised Libyan arms in return for curtailing American basing rights at Berbera, a strategically well-situated port. During this tense confrontational period between the US and Iraq, Libya was also identified as a supporter of the Ugandan-based insurgent movement that had launched a substantial attack on the government of Rwanda. The attempt failed but tensions in the region remained high.<sup>7</sup> The governments of Mali and Niger had experienced substantial violent opposition by the desert-dwelling Tuaregs within their borders—again, with the alleged support of Libya.<sup>8</sup> Mali's government was toppled shortly thereafter in a coup although no complicity of Libya has been reported. Libya's potential for involvement in Niger's internal affairs may explain that government's active support of the Saudis in the confrontation with Iraq. Niger sent 500 troops in an effort to buy anti-Libyan support should Qadhafi attempt to extend his influence into the mineral-rich northern region by helping to install a favorable government in Niger—as he had done in Chad.

Libya's activist role has had a long history in Africa, but this recent spate of genuine successes has not been the focus of much public attention due to the concentrated attention on the Gulf war. It would not be correct to say that Libya engineered all of these events, but Qadhafi certainly took advantage of the

world's diverted attention. Although in opposing the US Libya backed Iraq, it was not an active support—perhaps offering rare credit for having anticipated Iraq's unwarranted ambitions.

### Influence of Iran and Iraq

Also unappreciated publicly is another matter which calls for much closer monitoring of African developments. During the decade of the 1980s, Iran and Iraq have quietly but systematically divided Africa into two distinct diplomatic camps. This division appears to have escaped public attention and, in view of our having been caught by surprise by Iraq's interest in Kuwait, may have escaped the notice of Washington. In essence, it appears that for some time Iraq had been building a clearly identifiable network of support in Africa's Arab-dominated governments. This network becomes more significant if we appreciate that 80 percent of all Arabs reside in Africa and only 20 percent reside in the Middle East and that Iraq's popularity in Africa was blatantly manifested in only Arab-dominated states during its attempted annexation of Kuwait.

During the 1980s, Iran doubled her diplomatic missions in Africa to 26, a systematic effort aimed at Africa's black states.<sup>9</sup> Targeted countries include Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, and Kenya. A noteworthy thrust was made in Namibia at its independence celebrations while in South Africa, the Muslim community was often targeted by Iran. The methods of penetration include political and economic relations, aid, scholarships, and exchanges. Notably, Nelson Mandela received an invitation to visit Tehran. Iran's objectives are not clearly defined, but they include a mix of developing economic relations and the expansion of

Shi'a Islam. Moreover, the apparent geographic pattern also suggests the formation of an anti-Iraq diplomatic alliance.

In the mid-1980s, Iraq intensified its efforts at developing Africa's political and strategic resources. Although Iraq's attention had been concentrated on the war with Iran, Iraq began a diplomatic offensive that retrospectively appears to have built a support network for the planned expansion of its influence and territory. Iraq was very pragmatic in its diplomacy, avoiding Ba'hist ideology and Islamic factionalism. Iraq's objective was simply to align with the Arab-dominated states in Africa. Since most of these states were considerably poorer than the Arab states of the Middle East, they could more easily be approached by a secular republican government with arms, training, and economic aid. Success in Kuwait would lead to an Arab world led by Iraq, with Africa's Arabs forming the bulk of the support. Writing in *Jeune Afrique*, Francois Soudan reports that Mauritania was to protect the western flank and Sudan the southern flank of Saddam Hussein's newly organized Arab world.<sup>10</sup> A missile testing site for Iraq's Scud-Bs was planned to be in Mauritania, but the US and its allies discouraged this plan.<sup>11</sup> Those missiles could have been an important strategic factor in support of Polisario objectives in the western Sahara. The Polisario Front has opposed Morocco's claims to the western Sahara, and Morocco's active alliance with combat-troop support of America's efforts in Iraq was to buy continued backing of Morocco's claims. In 1991 on the eve of the war with Iraq, newspapers also reported Iraq's alleged intention to install Scud-B missiles near Sudan's northern border, within easy striking distance of Egypt's Aswan High Dam.<sup>12</sup> Nothing came of this but as these plans were reported on several occasions, Sudan may well have been approached by Iraq

but dissuaded by Egypt which would not have tolerated such a provocation, or perhaps Sudan sensed that Iraq's expansionist efforts were premature and inadequately supported. Such strategic formulations on the part of Iraq highlight Africa's sustained geographic value in a changing variety of strategic confrontations whose objectives affect the Indian Ocean, Middle East, and Mediterranean regions.

Where Africa's Arab countries bordering the Mediterranean were led by governments either hostile to Iraq (as were Egypt and Morocco) or guardedly sympathetic (as were Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria), there was considerably more widespread sympathy for Iraq among their populations. The greatest efforts for alliance were made in the Sahelian states, but Iraq generally failed as the war against the US quickly dissipated, and Libya quickly made the gains previously noted. Mauritania, backed solidly by Iraq, has faced Senegal across a tense border for several years. Senegal, investing in Saudi and American goodwill, sent a combat contingent to fight on the allied side—and lost a planeload full of soldiers in an accidental air crash in Saudi Arabia. Chad had been a recipient of Iraqi aid, as had been Djibouti and the Eritreans (who are fighting an apparently increasingly successful war for independence from Ethiopia—which in turn was supplied by Israel). Mali and Somalia had been unsuccessfully cultivated by Iraq. On the map, these efforts present a solid geographic front (except for Niger) stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Yassir Arafat made two trips to several key black-dominated states to persuade their governments to back Iraq's cause. These efforts failed and one after another black African country condemned the invasion and voiced approval of the concerted attempt to oust Iraq. These countries in-

cluded Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and, significantly, Nigeria—although there was substantial support for Saddam Hussein among the Muslims in Nigeria, a country with Africa's largest Muslim population. There was considerable support for Iraq among South Africa's mostly Indian Muslim community, and reportedly, some prominent black ANC officials also backed Hussein.<sup>13</sup>

The notable feature of these black African states is that all had been previously cultivated by Iran and all had opposed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Iran had established its relations before Iraq's expansionist attempt, but the entire episode reflects the sensed perception that Africa had been divided diplomatically by Iran and Iraq; that Iraq must have been laying the groundwork for the absorption of at least Kuwait; and that Africa is being systematically divided between Arabs and Muslims on one side and black Africans and non-Muslims on the other. This portends the establishment of a dividing line between Mauritania and Senegal, through Mali, Chad, and Sudan and between Somalia and Kenya on the Indian Ocean. Most of the African islands in the Indian Ocean have also been cultivated by Iraq. Should this division progress, a war breaking out between any countries on opposite sides of this division could quickly sweep across this Sahelian and sub-Saharan belt. It could engulf Nigeria once again, as in a recent outbreak of violence in Bauchi; and in 1990 during an attempted coup, hostility by non-Muslims was expressed about the domination by Muslims. In Chad and Sudan, the "north-south divide" has polarized Arab and non-Arab tensions for decades.

Confrontations in northern Africa could also portend the emergence of a substantially unified Arab bloc, led by a transnational coalition from perhaps Algeria and/or Egypt. As the most

populous of the modern Arab states, either country could shift the locus of Arab nationalism from the Middle East, as that region remains permanently embroiled in conflicts with Iran, Lebanon, and Israel, and potentially with Turkey and even the Soviet Union over the fate of the Soviet Union's own Muslim republics. Saddam Hussein's failure in 1991 does not preclude the emergence of other potential attempts to transcend both the present borders of the Arab states and the Red Sea in an attempt to eventually structure a huge Arab superpower. Saddam Hussein's premature attempt at such a reorganization may nevertheless have provided the outline for such a region while Qadhafi demonstrated Africa's innate vulnerabilities and also the West's lack of interest in the long-term potential of this region. Certainly the nearly half-billion Africans have not received the attention nor the strategic military investment that Kuwait's less than one million citizens received.

### **Africa and Foreign Intervention**

**T**HERE are numerous other conflicts raging throughout the continent but these conflicts may be distinguished from the ongoing turmoil in the Sahelian and Horn-centered regions. In broad terms, Africa's independence commenced from the northeast region with Sudan becoming independent in 1956, then progressed with Ghana's independence in 1957. The independence tide then swept West Africa, then Central Africa, followed by eastern Africa, and finally southern Africa, with Namibia becoming the latest colony to attain independence in 1990. Fittingly, South Africa is now embarking on a readjustment of its internal political authority. Violent independence struggles were experienced mostly among those who acquired independence last—

for example Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Namibia—and violence has been manifested in South Africa in the transitional process.

The prolonged conflicts in the southern Africa region are mostly internal affairs reflecting political readjustments of states in their early consolidative periods—except for South Africa, in which the transition could be revolutionary. Unless external powers capitalize on the wars in this region, the turmoil will not substantially hinder America's interests. The two major interventionists, Cuba and the Soviet Union, have all but totally withdrawn their active military resources. The region still remains attractive to Soviet arms suppliers, but this activity must be weighed against the fact that Angola has been pursuing diplomatic ties with a recalcitrant US; Mozambique has become the recipient of the greatest amount of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa; Zimbabwe has always been wary of Soviet intentions; and the Soviets have abandoned the attempt to finance, train, and arm the ANC to overthrow the South African government.

Numerous internal disturbances are experienced in many other countries of West, Central, and East Africa, but these also do not pose external challenges. Most are associated with the attempts to derive legitimate institutions by equilibrating internal power dynamics which is standard fare in the consolidative stage of state formation, especially under such impoverished and poorly integrated social conditions. These disturbances take their human toll, but as they represent no international security threat, addressing a response is a mostly moral concern. In itself, such nonthreatening disturbances, however, ought not to diminish our interest. Loosening central controls over the state and introducing multiple party structures as we officially recommend, could well exacerbate such tensions. As long as such internal disturbances

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remain isolated and contained, and foreign interventionists are dissuaded from capitalizing on such opportunities, these conflicts will pose little threat to US interests. Replacement of one regime with another not beholden to external powers has rarely caused substantial problems for US public or private interests. In fact, throughout the duration of the war in Angola, US companies pumped and exported oil from wells which were guarded by Cuban troops.

A radical government in South Africa would similarly not pose an insurmountable obstacle to US mineral require-

ments, given that government's need to exploit its single most productive source of foreign exchange, especially under what would be a tumultuous internal economic situation. The key, once again, is the nature of foreign intervention. In most of black Africa, such external activities are subsiding, but in northern Africa, such forces have been developing and pose prospects of forming a major Arab transnational force that could jeopardize our security interests in an arc from Portugal to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

### Notes

1. See "Ethiopia Wounded as Ally by U.S. in Gulf Crisis," *New York Times*, 14 December 1990.
2. "Libya Denounces Chad Evacuation," *New York Times*, 9 December 1990.
3. "Libyans' Hand Seen in Liberian Raids against Sierra Leone," *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 April 1991.
4. "U.S. Forces Evacuate 73 after Death Threats in Liberia," *New York Times*, 6 August 1990; "Strategic Interests Tie U.S. to Liberia," *New York Times*, 13 June 1990; "U.S. Evacuates 800 from Liberia," *New York Times*, 20 August 1990.
5. "US, Italy Rescue Hundreds of Foreigners from Somalia," *Sunday Montgomery Advertiser*, 6 January 1991.
6. "Libya: Gaddafi International," *Africa Confidential* 32, no. 5 (8 March 1991): 1.

7. *Ibid.*, 2.
8. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 16 October 1990, 28, hereafter cited as FBIS.
9. Based on Dr. Karl P. Magyar, "Sub-Saharan Africa: Political Marginalization and Strategic Realignment," paper presented at annual meeting of the *International Studies Association*, Vancouver, British Columbia, 20 March 1991.
10. FBIS, 8 March 1990, 3.
11. FBIS, 4 October 1990, 29.
12. "Sudan Denies It May Allow Iraqi Missiles Near Egypt," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 4 October 1990.
13. FBIS, 14 January 1991, 7. See also "Bush Rebuffs ANC Leader," *Washington Times*, 19 March 1991.

## Chapter 5

## Africa's Future

### *Strategic Policy Implications*

THE African continent will not rank as a primary area of strategic concern in the foreseeable future. Certainly no developments of a nature to require active combat intervention are encroaching on US interests. However, as our interests will remain intact in southern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean to Diego Garcia, Africa bears close watching as hostilities in this volatile region could very likely involve numerous African countries. The US-allied war with Iraq in 1991 suggests that Iraq's systematic expansion of influence during the 1980s has not been tracked or analyzed sufficiently. World War II and Israel's wars with her Arab neighbors concerned mostly the northern tier of African countries that abuts the Mediterranean or the Red Sea. Should the Arab world progress toward increased solidification, the center of Arab nationalism could shift to incorporate a substantial portion of Sahelian and sub-Saharan Muslim Africans. Such a coalition could assert itself in confrontations over oil, Israel, Aegean regional affairs, ongoing Middle East disputes, nuclear developments in the Arab world, and developments in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean areas. Should an Arab/Muslim superbloc emerge, Africa's Arabs would not only comprise the bulk of its population, but the Arab states bordering the Mediterranean might offer the leadership cadres as well.

There also exists the potential for a confrontation with black Africans living

below the sub-Saharan belt. This possibility became evident in the significant diplomatic division of Africa between Iran and Iraq and with Israel's stepped-up cooperation with Ethiopia. The cartographic features of this division point to the emergence of two clearly delineated regions. Iraq may have failed to roll across the Arabian Peninsula and to organize or lead the northern tier of African states, but the outline of such a region remains and could be further developed or exploited in its present form by either a successor to Saddam Hussein or to an Arab unifier. As noted, Qadhafi certainly took advantage of the turmoil over Kuwait when he exploited the opportunity with probably his greatest ever record of success.

If we assume that Ethiopia will be successfully fragmented and that Sudan will not reconcile its own internal north-south division, the cohesion of the Arab/Muslim bloc in northern Africa will be significantly enhanced. At the same time, Nigeria's internal conflicts are taking on increasingly religious overtones, which portends the prospect of another civil war.<sup>1</sup> Whether Qadhafi, Islamic fundamentalists, modern Arab nationalists, or a functional successor to Saddam Hussein, there exist numerous dynamic forces, all with transnational ambitions and programs which counsel us to monitor this vital region very closely.

Besides the disputes introduced by Islamic and other external forces, the Sahelian and sub-Saharan regions have

recently been marked by numerous types and incidences of unrest, although West Africa had traditionally been the most stable region on the continent despite high population density, numerous countries, and diversity of traditions and ethnic groups. Black African states which contain substantial Muslim populations will remain concerned with Arab and Middle Eastern affairs. This was demonstrated in Nigeria among the Muslim population in South Africa during the war over Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> Certainly there are divisions within the Islamic community, but these divisions will be transcended in overt conflicts involving Arab states against non-Arabs. This too was illustrated in that war.

Southern Africa's conflicts and instability are traceable to the struggles for liberation and majority rule and are beginning to approach political resolution, but the conflicts in the arc from Nouakchott to Mogadishu, which count several civil wars and a series of new disputes, are assuming an alarming pattern. Geographically, a clearly delineated division of the continent is emerging. It is conceivable that Africa north of the sub-Saharan region will be increasingly immersed in the volatile affairs of the Arab world and that this region could generate a series of conflicts which would indeed spill into the Middle East.

The war with Iraq also highlighted disputes in the Indian Ocean area which carry security implications for the United States. The use of B-52 bombers based at Diego Garcia allowed for the reemergence of the controversy regarding America's access to that island. Mauritius has never ceded the claim to Diego Garcia which, it claims, was excised from Mauritius before independence. The British, who were the colonial power, leased Diego Garcia to the US for 50 years. Its value was clearly demonstrated during the 1991 war as waves of B-52s performed on cue to soften

Iraq's entrenched positions. Before the war, Iraq had attempted to extend diplomatic influence to Mauritius and to other African island countries in the Indian Ocean.<sup>3</sup> Factions in Mauritius protested America's use of Diego Garcia against Iraq.

No insular power in the Indian Ocean is strong enough to pressure the US away from this valuable military facility. The location of the island and its superb military facilities make it imperative that some related communications, servicing, refueling, or alternative berthing or air basing rights also be maintained in the proximate region of eastern Africa. Diego Garcia could become the focus of strategic interest for Iran or India, both of which take an active interest in the Indian Ocean region. America's continued interests with regard to Diego Garcia could encounter opposition from a variety of sources, many of them fragile and subject to volatile political changes. India has also been extending her diplomatic influence in the western Indian Ocean while South Africa has a history of pursuing transport, trade, and economic interests among the islands of Seychelles, Comoro, Madagascar, and Mauritius.

Much of our historical relations with Africa revolved around the problems associated with South Africa's internal developments and external relations. America's clearly stated revulsion with apartheid-associated policies was not matched by a forceful stance to bring a quick end to them. To do so would have implied participation in the ouster of the white-dominated government—which would have had potentially grave economic and strategic consequences. South Africa has never represented a major trading or investment partner of the US, but since certain key minerals are of strategic value, our mutual modest-sized trade took on a qualitative dimension. The other advantage offered by South Africa is its location and ability to

monitor shipping traffic from the Indian and Atlantic oceans and potentially to interdict hostile naval movements in time of war. If southern Africa had come under the control of the Soviet Union, the West would have been "denied" a formidable economic and strategic prize, it was argued. The apparent logic of these arguments and the evidence of Soviet activities were sufficient to dissuade attempts to oust an offending government and to replace it with another one—but one beholden to the Soviets and Cubans. In fact, the veracity of these assumptions regarding the value of South Africa's economic and strategic importance was not debated sufficiently, and these arguments quickly waned once Mikhail Gorbachev began the reduction of Soviet commitments to the continent, confirming that the region had never played a major role in Soviet designs.<sup>1</sup> Southern Africa had long been unstable, would cost too much to organize and control effectively, and it contained the same mineral resources which the Soviets had in abundance.

Although southern Africa remains in turmoil, portions have begun to stabilize, and the transition in South Africa is expected to remain peaceful for the most part. Although external intervention will most likely be absent, there exists the potential that internal black-on-black violence could get out of hand. This violence could impede the transition process in South Africa and disrupt the established trade and transport infrastructure from Cape Town and Durban to Zaire's Shaba province. This disruption has already been anticipated by Zimbabwe, which maintains at great cost the

alternative transport route of the Beira Corridor through Mozambique. For the West and for southern Africa, the greatest danger would be damage to established economic interaction, but as of 1991, the negative strategic implications of this would be minor. Certainly, potential and strategic developments in Arab Africa are much more significant.

Our continued support for UNITA in Angola may also be questioned. America's modest level of support—and more so, South Africa's previous advanced level of direct military intervention—frustrated Soviet and Cuban objectives. But Cuban withdrawal from Angola has advanced on schedule while the US expresses its desire for democratic processes in that country. Should fair election in this war-torn country result in either a mixed administration or the accession to power by UNITA's Jonas Savimbi, sustained stability will still not be ensured. Since independence, that country has not had the opportunity to equilibrate its internal power structure without external intervention, and a mere election under conditions of devastation and recent conflict will hardly suffice to establish the popular legitimacy of a new and untested regime. Continued involvement by external powers will only delay the emergence of new forces in Angola while retarding the developmental process. US policy should focus on the reduction of external intervention in the region and the termination of arms shipments to both sides. This may also involve obtaining South Africa's compliance and offers an excellent opportunity to expand US-Soviet joint peacemaking efforts.

#### Notes

1. "Serious Muslim-Christian Clashes in Bauchi," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 24 April 1991, 27, hereafter cited as *FBIS*.

2. Alan Rake quotes the *Nigerian Sunday Times* as saying that a majority of Nigerians support Iraq. "Africa and the War," *New African*, March 1991, 30.

3. See *FBIS*, 13 April 1990, 71; 16 January 1991, 9; 28 January 1991, 20; and 10 February 1991, 31; and "Indian Ocean: Whose Ocean?" *Africa Confidential* 32, no. 4 (22 February 1991), 7.

4. An unexpected turn of events concerning South Africa's controversial security position con-

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cerns its advanced arms production capability. The allied forces in the war over Kuwait found themselves facing South Africa's potent G-5, 155-mm guns—which were, however, not brought into full action. See also *FTIS*, 28 January 1991, 11. South

Africa had also supplied lethal CB 470 bombs to Iraq during its previous war with Iran. James P. McWilliams, *Armstrong: South Africa's Arms Merchant* (London: Brassey's [UK] Ltd, 1989), 83.

## Chapter 6

## Africa's Role in International Drug Trafficking

ANOTHER more recent development of interest to America's African policy concerns the drug trade. In South America, this has been elevated to a security related matter, but in Africa the problem has not advanced to the same degree. Traditionally, many Africans have consumed marijuana and produced it locally, and this remains the case today. The continent has become a major transit point for international drug shipments due to its location, lack of law enforcement, and prospects for official participation in this lucrative trade.

Countries reporting problems with marijuana consumption include Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Cameroon, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast. The present level of consumption does not concern US interests due to its local character. However, several countries have become key transit points for major international drug traders including Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and above all Nigeria. Originating countries for supplies include India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Thailand, while the major markets are the US and to lesser extents, Great Britain, Italy, and other west

European countries. Egypt and South Africa are the continent's importers for domestic consumption.

All comprehensive assessments of Africa's role in international drug trafficking focus on Nigeria, whose citizens dominate this trade and who also have now become modest-level consumers. Dozens of Nigerians have been jailed throughout the world for drug smuggling activities. A recent US State Department report notes: "Almost 45 percent of the heroin seizures made at U.S. ports of entry in 1990 were from Nigerian couriers."<sup>1</sup> US officials have been frustrated in their effort to curb this major international transshipment operation and fear that the problem may worsen. Some Colombian ties have already been established in Africa while countries such as Nigeria and Mauritius could also be providing money-laundering facilities.<sup>2</sup> As the production of drugs in South America comes under control, it is expected that because of Africa's similar social and physical conditions it could emerge as a replacement for South America's drug production.

## Notes

1. US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report," March 1991, 325.

2. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 29 March 1991, 43.

## Chapter 7

## Conclusion

DEVELOPMENTS associated with Africa's northern tier, the Indian Ocean, the vestigial problems which remain in southern Africa, and the expanding drug traffic problems are currently the most important American concerns requiring careful monitoring. Conflicts throughout the continent will not abate soon, but if contained, and other external interests are dissuaded from intervening, such conflicts are more likely to terminate by attrition than by the alignment of opposing sides with external powers. The reduction of conflict casualties in Africa's wars will sooner be accomplished by assertively preventing external intervention by "balancing" another side in the conflict, in which case conflicts are assured of prolongation. Externally imposed regimes have rarely lasted peacefully, and they must be kept in power at great expense. Another requirement to encourage peace on the continent is the development of a policy of "arms starvation"—which could be effective if universally applied. Such a policy, however, will only be realized through the efforts of a United Nations-mandated initiative on the order of the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The equilibrating mechanism required to establish legitimacy in Africa's new states will no doubt entail the use of force for some time to come (as it did in most states after independence); however, the utilization of modern weapons for this purpose serves to prevent other social forces such as

economic development from advancing the legitimization process.

Where US interests are not directly challenged in an African conflict, our desire to help in its resolution can only be based on moral principles—themselves certainly justifiable—but this desire needs explicit statement, an appropriate strategy, and, as the allied effort against Iraq demonstrated, a regional or concerted effort should be pursued. But above all, there must be consistency. The vast expenditures in defense of Kuwait have not been matched in pursuit of human rights or even sheer survival in Africa. The message to Africans remains ambiguous. The Soviets have undertaken to cooperate at the diplomatic level on peace in Angola and Ethiopia. This cooperation offers Africans an indication that the continent can now aspire to channel its scarce resources toward development rather than for the purchase of arms.<sup>1</sup> And we would share with the Soviets a concern about the emergence of an Arab/Muslim superbloc which may divide the African continent along ethnic and religious lines and which would exert influence throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Africa will continue to be devastated by social and economic problems as well as by natural disasters. Certain aspects of the social problems such as drug trafficking or the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and other diseases can impact other regions of the

globe, hence external help in addressing these problems connotes more than moral response. Africa's economic problems are least likely to pose threats to the external community. The relatively few resources which Africans possess and which are in demand externally have generally been available despite the tumultuous security environment. Nigeria and Angola supply vast quantities of oil to the US, and they value this uninterrupted commercial exchange as much as we do. For example, oil flowed from Angola even as the war continued to rage. In essence, our strategic interests in Africa will least likely be impeded in the economic realm.

For the US, Africa has in the past played a peripheral role. Beyond offering

support, we have wisely avoided active armed intervention although numerous opportunities have presented themselves. We have reacted to the initiatives of the Soviets and Cubans, but we have abstained from direct intervention in such devastating wars as those in Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. But our armed forces have also had to extricate Americans from Liberia and Somalia. Again we reacted to events, and in both these cases, while our attention was diverted to events in Kuwait. That war highlighted the emergence of many new forces that suggests that developments in Africa have taken a new turn, which makes our close monitoring and analysis of events on that continent imperative.

#### Notes

1. Regarding the cooperation in Angola, see "Soviets Extend Olive Branch to Angolan Rebels," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 13 December

1990. See also *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 22 April 1991, 9.